

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 220 490

TM 820 503

AUTHOR Pooley, Richard C.
TITLE Self Evaluation of Organizations.
PUB DATE Apr 82
NOTE 22p.; Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Midwest Region of the National Organization of Human Service Educators (1st, Williams Bay, WI, April 1982).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Data Collection; Decision Making; Delivery Systems; *Evaluation Criteria; *Human Services; Information Utilization; *Input Output Analysis; Models; *Organizational Effectiveness; Performance; Program Evaluation; *Self Evaluation (Groups)
IDENTIFIERS Organizational Diagnosis Questionnaire

ABSTRACT

Evaluation within human service organizations is defined in terms of accepted evaluation criteria, with reasonable expectations shown and structured into a model of systematic evaluation practice. The evaluation criteria of program effort, performance, adequacy, efficiency and process mechanisms are discussed, along with measurement information requirements for each. The relationships between criteria within the program design and task environment for a service delivery operation are described. The decision-making approach to evaluation is considered with various information sources including existing records, data collection, tacit knowledge and rumors. Information is shown to be shared or unique among program treatment, research and management domains. An example of organizational diagnosis as an internal document for the management of an agency serving adolescent boys illustrates the evaluation issues discussed. The use of the Organizational Diagnosis Questionnaire, data analysis and resulting priorities for improvement are described. (CM)

* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *

ED220490

SELF EVALUATION OF ORGANIZATIONS

Richard C. Pooley Ph.D.
Southern Illinois University
at Edwardsville

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as
received from the person or organization
originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve
reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this docu-
ment do not necessarily represent official NIE
position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

R.C. Pooley

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

A paper presented at the First Annual Conference of the Midwest
Region of the National Organization of Human Service Educators,
Lake Geneva Campus, George Williams College, Williams Bay, Wisconsin
April, 1982.

7M 820503

Human Service Organizations are sometimes beset with organizational dysfunction. The complexities associated with operating service delivery systems often produce unpredictable outcomes that may displace service goals. Systematic evaluation is likely to reveal sources of organizational anomalies so that they may be corrected or avoided. The contention here is that evaluation practice need not take the form of expensive external assessment but rather can be conducted within the organization as part of the overall task environment. In fact if an organization does not evaluate itself someone else may do it for them and that someone may or may not be concerned with the best interests of the organization. So managers are well advised to integrate evaluation practice into the service delivery functions. In this connection evaluation is not separate from service delivery - it is part of it.

The purpose of this paper is to define evaluation in terms of accepted evaluative criteria and reasonable expectations and then to structure these components into a model of systematic evaluation practice.

Evaluation Defined

Evaluation is concerned with the worth, merit or value of some object, service or product of some process. Daniel Stufflebeam (1980) defines evaluation in the following words:

Evaluation is the systematic assessment of the worth or merit of some object. Evaluations should be undertaken to ascertain how good objects are in terms of the values and needs of the persons they serve. Evaluations are done to provide guidance for developing and improving programs and other objects and to provide accountability reports to interested groups, particularly policy boards, consumers, and funding agencies. The process of evaluation is complex; and involves discerning the criteria against which to assess an object,

Identifying key questions, obtaining and analyzing relevant information and reporting findings in an understandable and useable form. In general good evaluations evidence high levels of utility, feasibility, propriety, and technical adequacy. (p.25)

Another definition may be found in the Evaluation Thesaurus which is a compendium of terms and definitions compiled by Michael Scriven (1981).

EVALUATION The process of determining the merit or worth or value of something; or the product of that process. The special features of evaluation, as a particular kind of investigation (distinguished e.g. from traditional empirical research in the social sciences), include a characteristic concern with cost, comparisons, needs ethics, and its own political, ethical, presentational, and cost dimensions; and with the supporting and making of sound value judgments, rather than hypothesis-testing. The term is sometimes used more narrowly (as is "science") to mean only systematic and objective evaluation, or only the work of people labeled "evaluators." While evaluation in the broad sense is inescapable for rational behavior or thought, professional evaluation is frequently worthless and expensive. Evaluation - properly done-can be said to be "a science" in a loose sense, as can, for example, teaching; but it is also an art, an inter-personal skill, something that judges and juries and literary critics and real estate assessors and jewelry appraisers do-and thus not "one of the sciences." (p. 53)

These definitions serve as adequate and accepted parlance of what is meant by and expected of the practice of evaluation. In general the evaluation of service delivery may ask the question 'who does what to whom at what

cost with what effort producing what outcomes?"

Evaluative Criteria

There are at least five evaluative criteria that are useful to structure an evaluation task. They are presented here in descriptive terms together with some examples of the information requirements appropriate to each criteria.

Evaluative criteria developed by Suchman (1967) and extended by others (Attkisson, Hargreaves, Horowitz & Sorensen, 1978) form a foundation for evaluation practice. Evaluation is described in terms of program effort, performance, adequacy, efficiency, and process. These levels have clearly differentiated characteristics (Attkisson, et al., p. 4-5.) and are paraphrased next:

1. Effort

This level focuses on the quantity and quality of programmatic inputs including information on the number and type of clients, type and efforts of staff, money and other resources being expended, and programmatic sanctions and/or expectations as mandated by law, regulations, and standards. The capacity for effort is a key feature of level of effort criteria.

Effort measurement requires information about the amount and distribution of resources put into the program including: Sources of income and expenditures; Allocation of staff time, numbers and types of clients; How dollars, staff, and clients are interrelated.

2. Performance

This level reflects programmatic outputs including information on the number and types of changes in clients and in the nature of the system being evaluated. Performance is a measurement of the consequences of effort. Performance evaluations require clarity of immediate and future goals specific to clients programs and service delivery systems.

Performance measurement requires information on the outcomes and effectiveness of program effort including: Clients acceptance of service offered; Improvement in client status; Changes infrequency or intensity of problems addressed by programs; Effective linkage of clients to other necessary and appropriate resources; Level of service availability and accessibility achieved over time.

3. Adequacy

Adequacy focuses on the relationship of program effort and performance to the level of need for the program within its larger environment. 'This criterion of success refers to the degree to which effective performance is adequate to the total amount of need . . . (and) is obviously a relative measure depending upon how high one sets one's goals (Suchman, 1967, p. 63)'. Adequacy can be conceptualized as the rate of program effectiveness multiplied times the number of persons exposed to the program (divided) by the number of persons in need of the program.

Adequacy measurement requires information about effort and performance relative to measures of community need or demand such as: Match between efforts and needs; Adequacy of performance effectiveness relative to level of need; Appropriateness of clients being served relative to high risk groups or mandated target populations; Awareness of services among citizenry.

4. Efficiency

Efficiency refers to the relationship among effort, performance and adequacy and is measured by examining strategies for minimizing effort while maximizing program performance and adequacy. 'Efficiency is concerned with the evaluation of alternative paths or methods in terms of costs -- in money, time, personnel, and public convenience. In a sense, it represents a ratio between effort and performance -- output divided by input (Suchman, 1967, p. 64)'.

Efficiency measurement requires information about how effort is organized to get greatest performance and adequacy such as: Cost of providing effective services; Comparisons of the efficiency and efficacy (effectiveness) of different programs or methods of service.

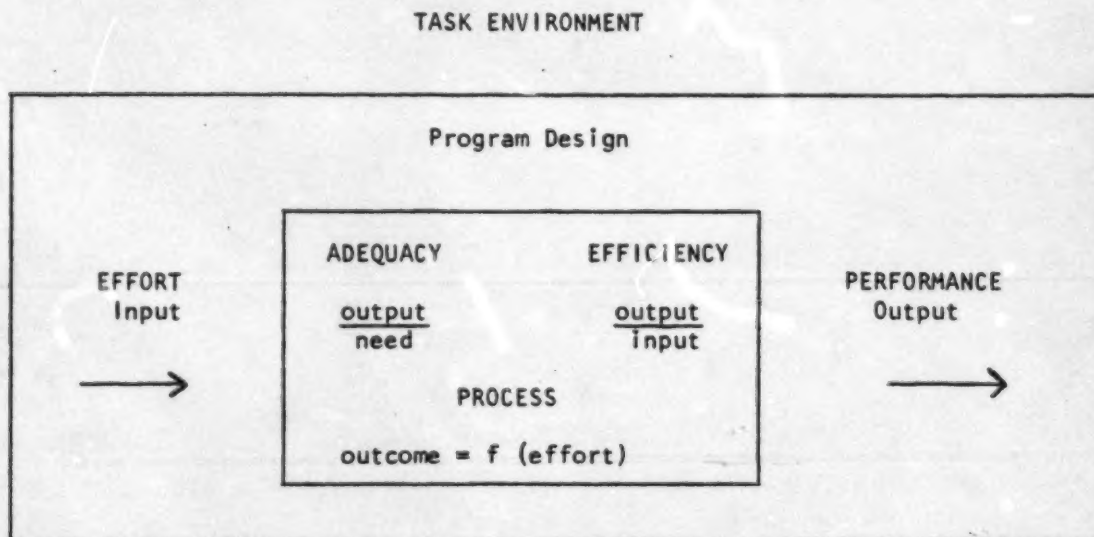
5. Process

This level focuses on the mechanisms by which effort is translated into outcome -- including the application of research methodologies to isolate causality and to foster the discovery of new knowledge. It is the study of the means whereby a program produces results. . . process studies can have both administrative and scientific significance . . . the measurement of process should include four major areas of investigation: (a) specification of salient program attributes that determine its effectiveness; (b) analysis of differential effectiveness among target populations served by the program; (c) specification of contextual conditions associated with optimal program functioning; and (d) specification of the range and potency of effects associated with the program.

Process measurement requires information specifying salient attributes, recipient characteristics, contextual conditions,

and the potency and range of effects associated with the program; identifying causal relations between effort and outcome; establishing maximal generalizability of effects to other environments; controlling or explaining other factors, independent of program effort that could possibly account for program outcomes.

The model shown below structures the criteria described above in terms of how they fit into a program design and into the subsequent task environment when the program is implemented.



The large rectangle symbolizes the task environment of a service delivery operation. That is the locality or target that the service is intended to reach. The smaller rectangle symbolizes the specific project or program design (organization) which is intended to provide a service. This organization derives its input in terms of EFFORT from the environment in terms of resources (e.g. people, materials, funds etc.). The organization is expected to PERFORM some output that will enhance the community from which it draws its sustenance. It should be clear that in many examples of service delivery the boundaries shown by the rectangles are not necessarily local ones or "cast in concrete" as it were. They are merely metaphors for domains of input, function and output.

Types of Evaluation

There are dozens of accepted approaches to evaluation and there are dozens of variations to any approach depending on the specifics of the evaluation task. Ernest House (1980) has subsumed the many models into eight basic approaches to evaluation. They are: Systems Analysis, Behavioral Objectives, Decision Making, Goal-free, Art Criticism, Professional Review, Quasi-legal and Case Study. Each approach is defined in terms of the intended audience, the underlying assumptions, the methodology, the desired outcome and some typical questions that are to be answered by the evaluation.

As this paper is concerned with organizational variables the "Decision Making" approach is considered to be an appropriate model. The Decision Making model defines administrators as its major audience or reference group. It assumes consensus on general goals and criteria. Surveys, interviews and natural variation are the principle methodologies. The desired outcomes are effectiveness and quality control. Typical questions to be answered are: Is the program effective? What parts are effective? (House 1980). The Decision Making evaluation is structured by the decisions to be made by administrators or managers. The evaluation task is to collect and present information to the manager that can be judged in a way to produce rational decisions by the manager. This outcome requires reliable information.

Information Systems

The sources of information in any organization are varied in both form and quality. Let us examine some of these sources.

1. Existing records: Most, if not all, organizations maintain some records of their service delivery operation. Such records include budgets, case files, job descriptions, project census, procedures etc. This information may be collected and summarized in order to illuminate aspects of

the organization that may be relevant to the decisions to be made.

2. Data Collection: Information may be generated by the evaluator through the use of surveys, questionnaires, interviews (structured and instructured), staff meetings etc. These methods may distill complex information patterns into manageable data sets that are described and interpreted.

3. The Development of Tacit Knowledge: It is not surprising that while conducting evaluations we may learn even more from our experience if we formalize the information that is available to us outside the realm of statistical analysis. We can make daily happenings more comprehensible by organizing our experience into manageable symbols (i.e. words, models) that can be reorganized, observed and interpreted. I refer to the possibility of articulating our tacit knowledge (Polanyi, 1958; Stake 1978) which is the singular communication skill that distinguishes mankind from the lower animals. Michael Polanyi (1958) has described this type of knowledge development in terms of what learning theorists call "Type C", or latent learning:

We have seen that in the process of latent learning, described as Type C, animals reorganize their memories to experience mentally. It appears now that the intellectual superiority of man is due predominately to an extension of this power by the representation of experience in terms of manageable symbols which he can reorganize, either formally or mentally for the purpose of yielding new information. This enormously increased power of reinterpretation is of course ultimately based on that relatively slight superiority of the tacit powers which constitute our gift of speech. To speak is to contrive signs, to observe their fitness and to interpret their alternative relations; though the animal possesses each

of these three faculties, he cannot combine them. (p. 82).

There are aspects of our daily experience on the job that are somehow understood but not articulated. Concious development and presentation of such information can be of great value to the evaluator and the decision maker. Tacit knowledge may be revealed by systematic probing during interviews and staff meetings.

4. The Rumor Mill: Rumors persist in most, if not all, organizations. Rumors are notoriously unreliable and equally tenacious. More often than not rumors are based on non-scientific thinking. Ashley Montagu has defined the difference between scientific and non scientific thinking: "The difference between the way a scientist thinks and the way a layman thinks is: The scientist will accept proof without certainty. The layman will accept certainty without proof." Rumors are largely based on the latter kind of thinking. Although there may be truth contained in a rumor such information should be put to rigorous validity checks.

It is important that all relevant parties in a service delivery system are working with the same information but this is not always the case. Furthermore it is true that all members of the organization need not have access to all information - some information is irrelevant to their task.

Care should be taken that appropriate information is shared with appropriate parties in order to increase organization effectiveness.

A model of the general content in a human service information system was presented by Sorensen and Elpers (1978). The authors specify three domains where information is required. They are: (1) clinical or treatment monitoring, including supervision and review of treatment interventions and communication of instructions to the treatment staff; (2) research such as a study to determine which of two or more treatment modalities are most effective for the costs incurred; and (3) management

information such as planning and controlling acquisition, the use of the organization's resources and assessing its efficiency and performance. Each information domain possesses data that may be of use to one or more of the other domains. This situation is diagrammed below.

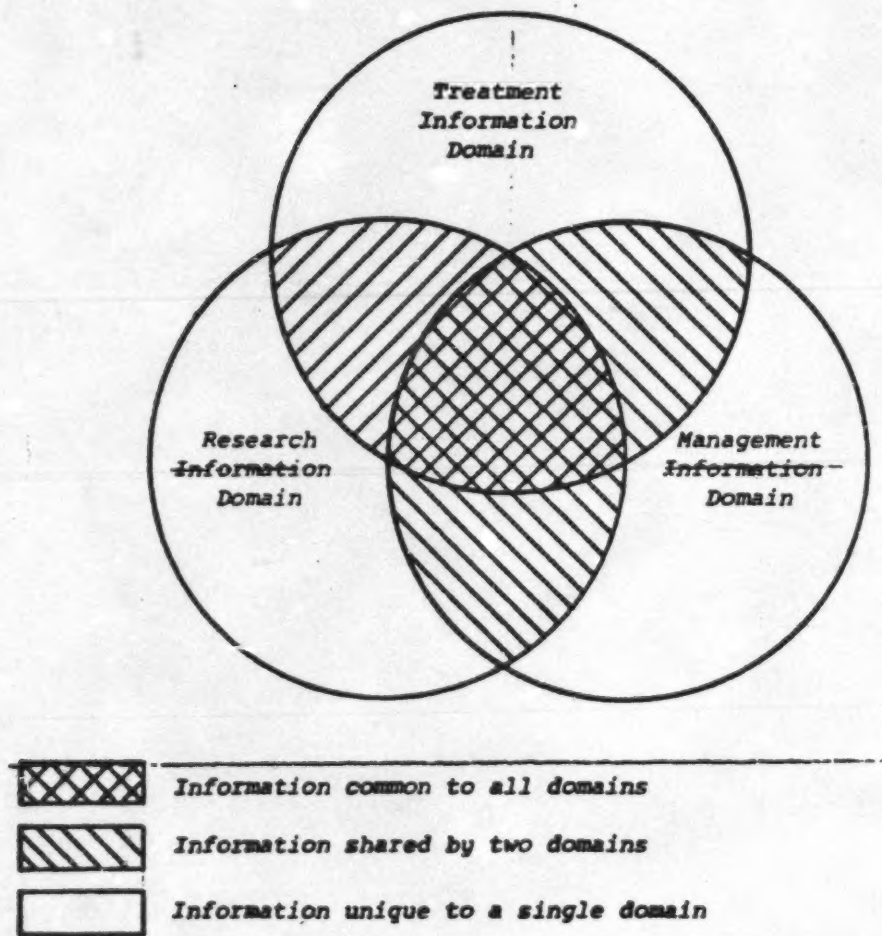


FIGURE 1 Overlapping Domains of Information Systems

Staff members who operate in each information domain may identify their information needs and assure that the appropriate information is shared within the organizational structure. Rensis Likert (1961) has described the importance of information flow from the bottom-up as well as top-down. He recommends a "Linking Pin" function to establish and maintain the information sharing:

These results demonstrate that the capacity to exert influence upward is essential if a supervisor (or manager) is to perform his supervisory functions successfully. To be effective in leading his own work group, a superior must be able to influence his own boss; that is, he needs to be skilled both as a supervisor and as a subordinate. In terms of group functioning, he must be skilled in both leadership and membership functions and roles. (p. 14).

At this point evaluation has been defined in terms of expectations and evaluative criteria. The major approaches to evaluation have been named and various sources of information and information systems have been discussed. Next an example of a brief organizational evaluation will be presented to illustrate how the issues described earlier come together in practice.

THE TASK

This report was intended as an internal document submitted to the management of an agency which served adolescent boys (ie. disturbing behaviors). Its purpose is to present information concerning the employees perceptions of the organization. The audience of this report is primarily to be the management of the agency. The information presented may be used to structure appropriate efforts designed to improve organizational functioning in specific categories of organizational behavior.

The need to conduct such a study emerged from recent program changes and staff turnover. Utilization of the information presented here may improve service delivery to the clients and improve employee relations as well.

MEASUREMENT

In order to accomplish the task the Organizational Diagnosis Questionnaire (ODQ) (Preziozi, 1980) was used. The instrument is composed of thirty-five positive statements about seven categories of organizational behavior. The names of each category together with a one-line definition in the form of the generic question follows:

1. PURPOSE: What business are we in?
2. STRUCTURE: How do we divide up the work?
3. LEADERSHIP: Does someone keep the boxes in balance?
4. RELATIONSHIPS: How do we manage conflict among people and technologies?
5. REWARDS: Do all needed tasks have incentives?
6. HELPFUL MECHANISMS: Have we adequate coordinating technologies?
7. ATTITUDE TOWARD CHANGE: How changeable is the organization?

Each category is measured by five positive statements within the ODQ. The response mode is a seven point Likert-type scale where 1. = Agree Strongly;

2. = Agree; 3. = Agree Slightly; 4. = Neutral; 5. = Disagree Slightly;
6. = Disagree; 7. = Disagree Strongly.

Scores less than four indicate a favorable perception regarding the category with one being the most favorable perception. Scores greater than four indicate an unfavorable perception of the category with seven being the most unfavorable response.

METHOD

The Organizational Diagnosis Questionnaire (ODQ) was administered to twenty-four (N=24) employees at all levels. The employees were instructed to identify their job title and length of service with the organization only to insure personal anonymity. The data was collected on December 17 & 18, 1981. Because there was a substantial number of relatively new employees on the job it was of interest to analyze the data in three sets ; new employees, old employees and all employees. Actually four sets emerged: Group 1 (N=8) Employees on the job for more than six months; Group 2 (N=10) Employees on the job for six months or less; Group 3 (N=6) Employees who did not indicate their length of service, and Group 4 (N=24) All respondents.

Descriptive statistics, Mean and Standard Deviation (S.D.), were computed on all categories (Purpose, Structure, Leadership, Relationships, Rewards, Mechanisms, and Change) for each of the four groups. These data were tabulated and rendered on graphs in order to facilitate visual inspection and comparison among groups.

RESULTS

Table 1 presents the Mean and Standard Deviation (S.D.) of each category by each group. Remember that as mean scores approach one a more favorable perception of the category is indicated. As mean scores approach seven

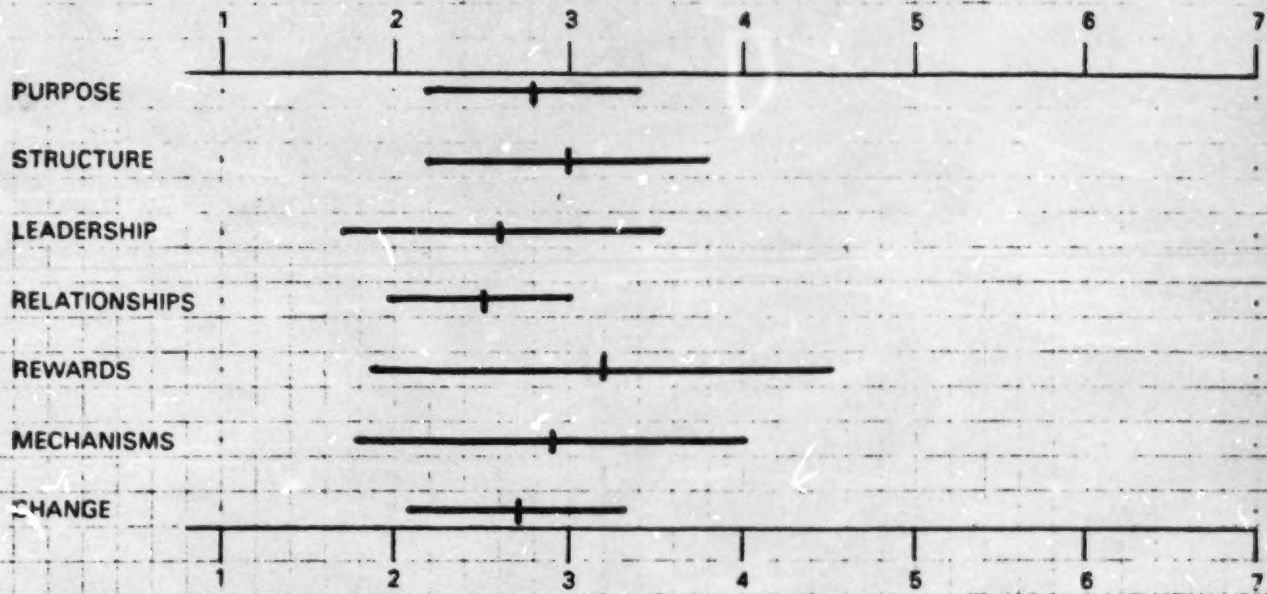
a more unfavorable perception is indicated. A mean value of four indicates a neutral perception.

TABLE 1
Mean and Standard Deviation calculated
on each category for each group.

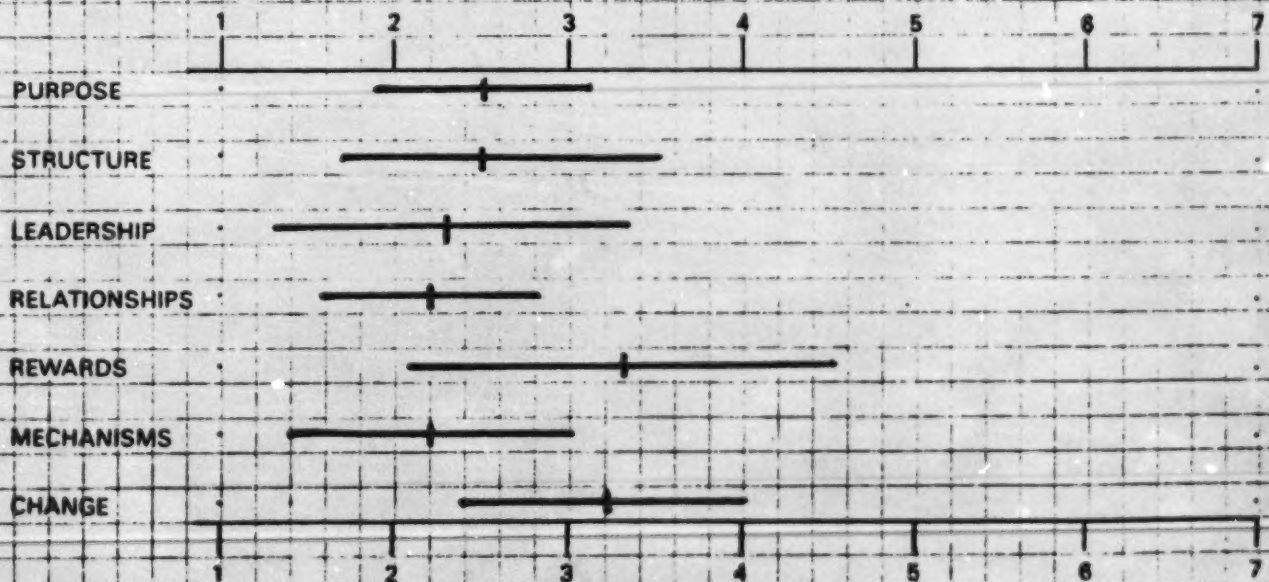
Scale	Group 1 N = 8		Group 2 N = 10		Group 3 N = 6		Group 1+2+3 N = 24	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
PURPOSE	2.8	.6	2.5	.6	3.4	1.2	2.8	.8
STRUCTURE	3.0	.8	2.6	.9	3.5	1.0	2.9	1.1
LEADERSHIP	2.6	.9	2.3	1.0	2.9	1.3	2.6	1.0
RELATIONSHIPS	2.5	.5	2.2	.6	2.6	.9	2.4	.6
REWARDS	3.2	1.3	3.3	1.2	2.8	.7	3.1	1.1
MECHANISMS	2.9	1.1	2.2	.8	3.0	1.7	2.7	1.2
CHANGE	2.7	.6	3.2	.8	2.7	.3	2.9	.7

The data presented in Table 1 is presented on graphs next. There is a graph for each of the three subgroups and a graph presenting the composite results of all respondents.

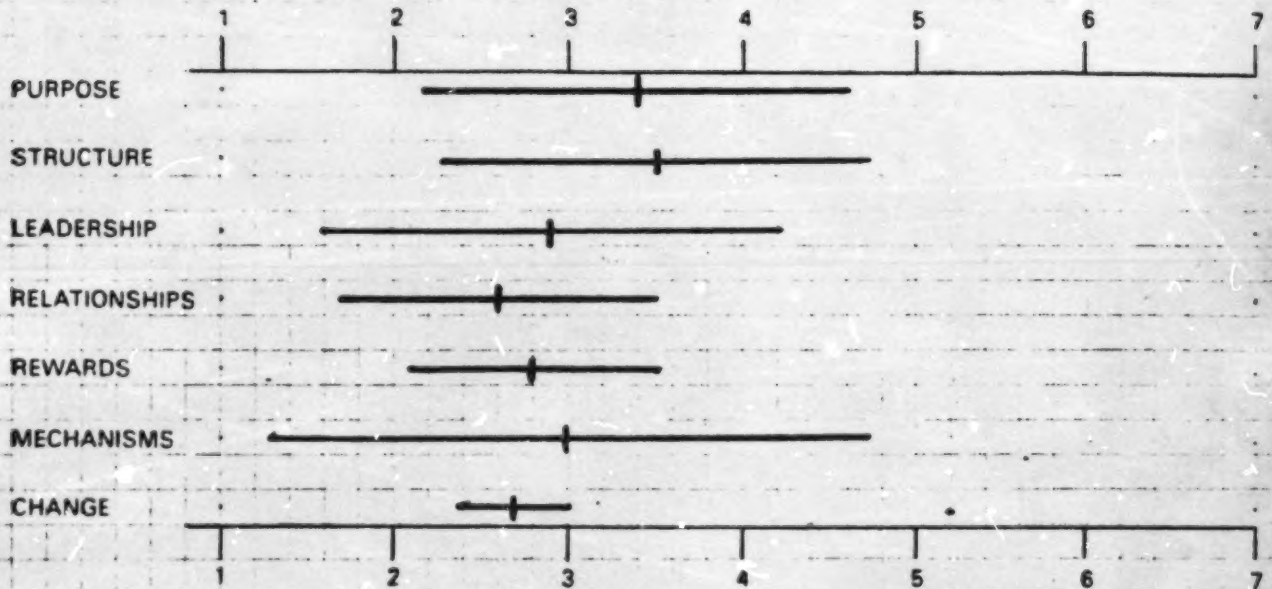
The short vertical lines indicate the Mean value computed on each category. The longer horizontal lines indicate the variability among responses. Shorter horizontal lines indicate that the responses tend to cluster about the mean (i.e., greater agreement with the mean score among respondents). Longer horizontal lines indicate that the responses tend to scatter greater distances about the mean (i.e., less agreement with the mean score among respondents).



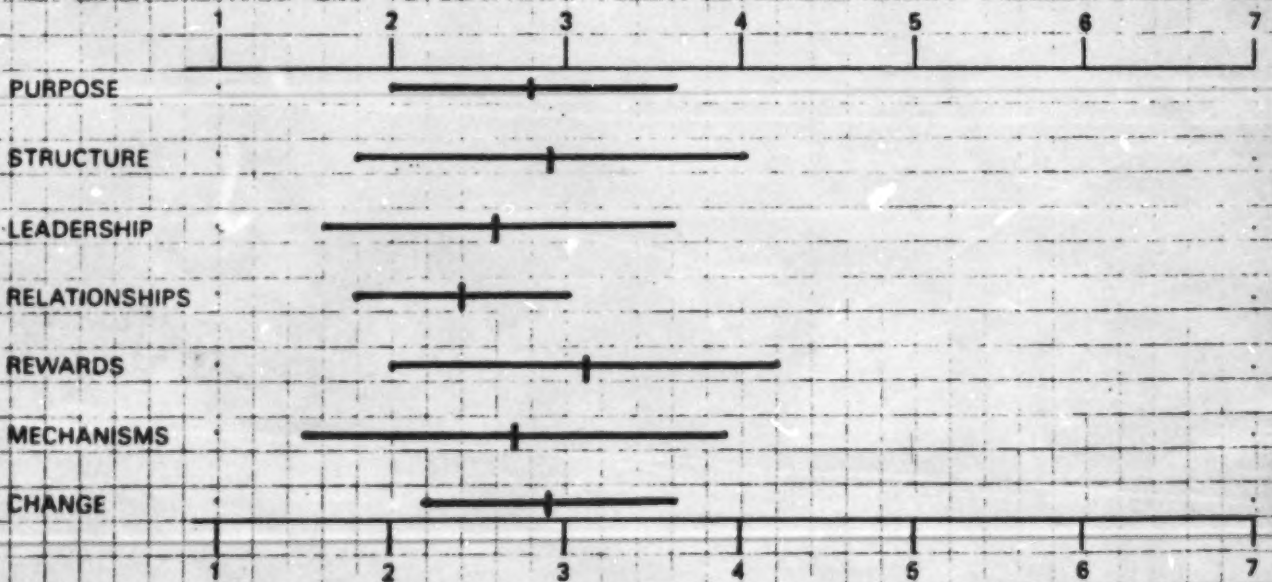
Group 1 (N=8) Responses of Employees on the job for more than six months.



Group 2 (N=10) Responses of Employees on the job for six months or less.



Group 3 (N=6) Responses of Employees Who Did Not Indicate Length of Service



Group 4 (N=24) Results of All Respondents.

DISCUSSION

There does not appear to be significant variation on the responses to the categories among the four groups. Therefore interpretation of Group 4 (All Respondents) is adequate to diagnosis the organization.

The perception of the organization by all respondents appears to be favorable to some degree. There were no mean score greater than 3.1 Rewards. The category that the respondents see as most favorable is Relationships. However there is room for improvement in all categories. Based on these data a list of priorities to expend effort on organizational improvement follows:

PRIORITIES

1. Rewards. The system of task incentives might be examined and improved.
2. Structure. The division of labor may be inspected to determine if inequity in task expectation exists.
3. Attitude Toward Change. When change is planned staff should be acquainted with the change in advance so consensus is maximized.
4. Purpose. The goals of the organization may be articulated clearly and frequently.
5. Helpful Mechanisms. Insure consistency in service delivery technologies among the treatment functions, the staff and the community.
6. Leadership. The task environment of each organizational sub-division should be articulated and understood by all members of the organization.
7. Relationships. Continue coaching in conflict management among people (i.e., staff and clients) and technologies (i.e., treatment strategies).

Judging from the information generated by this study the agency is functioning in a positive fashion in all categories of organizational behavior that were examined in this investigation. As always there are sources of error such as false positive or false negative responses

on the part of those who participated but we may assume that such error is minimized by the balancing process of statistical description. Organizational functioning may be enhanced by apportioning resources such as time and effort toward internal review and inservice training in accordance with the resultant list of priorities.

REFERENCES

Preziosi, Robert C. Organizational Diagnosis Questionnaire. In J. Pfeiffer and J. Jones (Eds.), The 1980 Annual Handbook for Group Facilitators. San Diego: University Associates Inc., 1980.

END OF REPORT

DISCUSSION OF THE REPORT AND RELATED ISSUES

All of the issues discussed earlier in this paper are not reflected in the brief example of an evaluation report. However, the results of this modest study may be extended in a variety of ways in order to improve organizational functioning. For example the individual items that measure Rewards may be examined more closely to obtain more precise information regarding the respondents concerns with this issue. Suppose the staff as a group responded unfavorably to the statement "All tasks to be accomplished are associated with incentives." During staff meetings tasks that are not connected to incentives may be identified and appropriate incentives may then be attached to the tasks.

The issue of Structure may be illuminated by a closer look at the appointment of staff time among various assignments. If inequities exist they may be identified and corrected. This involves the evaluative criteria of EFFORT & EFFICIENCY.

If the topic of Attitude Toward Change received low marks then the organization will do well to improve its information management system as described earlier. Changes are made to improve the consequences of effort and the criteria of PERFORMANCE is a key factor here.

Purpose is also connected to PERFORMANCE because this criteria requires clarity of immediate and future goals.

A Helpful Mechanism deficiency may be corrected with appropriate in-service-training and appropriate evaluation of that training in order to improve PROCESS.

Problems in Leadership may be examined and corrected with techniques using The Managerial Grid described by Blake & Houston (1975) in order to improve EFFORT, EFFICIENCY & PERFORMANCE.

A Client Satisfaction Scale (See Larsen et. al., 1979) may be used to improve Relationships among staff and clients and enhance the ADEQUACY

AND PERFORMANCE of the program. A needs assessment may be required as well to measure Adequacy.

The forgoing statements are merely examples of the action that may be taken based on the results of an organizational diagnosis. Each individual evaluation will suggest the appropriate action needed in a specific setting so the manager may make informed decisions.

CONCLUSIONS

It has been pointed out that external professional evaluations may be expensive and meaningless. But that does not diminish the importance of maintaining evaluation practice within the organizational structure. The people within the organization are familiar with the information sources and are aware of the nuances peculiar to their setting. For these reasons certain existing staff members may be best equipped to undertake the evaluation process. The organization can establish this competence by formalizing self-evaluation practice within the task environment. If evaluative skills are lacking the process may be initiated by an evaluation consultant and maintained thereafter by the organization. This paper is intended as an example of how one might begin to structure an internal evaluation and to encourage others to extend what has been said here in order to meet their specific evaluation needs.

REFERENCES

- Attkisson, C., Hargreaves, W., Horowitz, M., & Sorensen, J. (Eds.)
Human Service Program Evaluation. New York: Academic Press, 1978.
- Blake, R. & Mouton, J. An Overview of the Grid. Training & Development Journal. May, 1975.
- House, E. R. Evaluating with Validity. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1980.
- Larsen, D., Attkisson, C., Hargreaves, W. & Nguyen, T. "Assessment of Client/Patient Satisfaction: Development of a General Scale." Evaluation & Program Planning, 1979, Vol 2, 197-207.
- Polanyi, M. Personal Knowledge, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958.
- Pooley, R. C. An Organizational Diagnosis. Unpublished Manuscript, 1982
- Preziozi, R. C. Organizational Diagnosis Questionnaire. In J. Pfeiffer and J. Jones (eds.) The 1980 Handbook For Group Facilitators. San Diego. University Associates Inc., 1980
- Scriven, M. Evaluation Thesaurus. Inverness CA: Edgepress, 1981.
- Stake, R. The Case Study Method on Social Inquiry. Educational Researcher, 1978, 7, (2), 5-8.
- Stufflebeam, D. L. An Overview of the Evaluation Center, In Evaluation News. Barbara Gross Davis (ed.), San Francisco: Evaluation Institute, University of San Francisco, Summer 1980, 16, 25-27.
- Suchman, E. Evaluative Research Principles and Practice in Public Service and Social Action Programs. New York: Russell Seige Foundation, 1967.